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For Immediate Release: October 5, 2005  
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**State Fire Officials Launch Fire Prevention Week**  
***October 9-15, 2005***

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan launched national Fire Prevention Week, October 9-15, 2005 by reminding people to blow out their candles before they go out. He said, "Candles are one of the leading causes of fires and fire deaths in the home. This year's theme Candle 'Use Candles with Care: When you go out, blow out!' reminds us to be careful with candles and burn them inside a one-foot circle of safety." Coan said, "Just last weekend there were three serious candle fires in the state and one took the life of a 54-year old man."

"Candles should be used inside of one-foot from *Circle of Safety*, free of anything that can catch fire such as drapes, curtains, walls, and centerpieces," said Coan. "So many of our fatal fires are caused when people fall asleep before they blow the candle out," he added.

In 2004, candles were the cause of 222 fires, 3 deaths, 32 civilian and 25 firefighter injuries, and \$6.6 million in damages. Although candle fires rose 14% from 2003, they were just slightly lower than the 225 candle fires experienced in 2002. Overall, candle fires have been declining since they peaked in 1999 at 342.

Coan said, "Fire officials have teamed up with schools, senior centers, local businesses and other organizations to teach young and old and everyone in between how to prevent fires and how to survive those that do occur." This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year that Papa Gino's Inc. has sponsored open houses at fire stations all across New England.

Coan said, "Public fire education is working in Massachusetts – through the 11 years of the S.A.F.E. Program, we have cut the average number of child fire deaths in this state in half." The Student Awareness of Fire Education Program (S.A.F.E.) provides small grants to local fire departments so that trained firefighters can team up with classroom teachers to teach fire safety. Coan added, "Together we are raising a fire safe generation of children."

“The fire service knows that young, old and everyone in between needs basic information on fire prevention and fire survival. Fire officials ask that each person take responsibility for their own fire safety for those of their neighbors by following taking a few easy steps to safety.”

- Install smoke alarms on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area.
- Test them monthly to make sure they are in good working order.
- Make a home escape plan
- Hold a home fire drill.
- Remember to “put a lid” on cooking fires and to “stand by your pan”.
- Burn candles inside a one-foot circle of safety.
- Empty the lint filter on the dryer after every load.
- Have heating systems checked by a professional every year.
- Restrict smoking to outdoor areas only.

For more information about candle fire safety please go to [www.mass.gov/osfm/pubed](http://www.mass.gov/osfm/pubed) and click on Candle Firefactors or call 1-877-9NO-FIRE (1-877-966-3473).